

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

TAKING THE PMHS TO A HIGHER LEVEL



by Oscar Morgan

In our last issue of *Linkage*, I summarized the activities over the past year of the Public Mental Health System (PMHS). My goal continues to remain focused on implementing quality mechanisms to assure that services are congruent with the preference of consumers and their respective family members.

Contained within this issue of *Linkage* are summary results of our first survey of consumer satisfaction with the PMHS, which also assessed consumers' health status, symptoms and functioning. These survey results will now be used to help us further shape the PMHS system to improve the mix and funding of services that meet the special needs of consumers. (See also pages 2-4.)

Guided by the principle of consumer choice, MHA is encouraged by the results of the current

consumer survey. MHA will utilize the results to continue to refine the PMHS. We thank the consumers, family members, and R.O.W. Sciences, Inc, the independent company which conducted this study, for their participation in the process. This survey is but one step in taking Maryland's PMHS toward a higher level of proficiency and efficiency. I am confident that with the ongoing support and collaboration of the mental health community — consumers, advocates, and providers alike — we will continue to enhance the PMHS. This system not only emphasizes but demands high quality, cost-effective mental health services which are consumer-driven and culturally competent. Services and programs remain individualized and flexible.

I welcome each of you on this continual journey of refining the PMHS. Together, we will excel in service provision, systems accountability and cultural competency. ■

Statewide Consumer Telephone Surveys

Statewide telephone surveys were administered in the summer of 1998 to assess consumer satisfaction and outcomes with mental health services received through the Public Mental Health System (PMHS). These surveys provided information about the consumers' perception of multiple aspects of the mental health services they receive. This information will help in the implementation of system improvements based on consumer input and facilitate the objective of the PMHS as a "consumer-driven" system.

Data collection and analysis were performed by R.O.W. Sciences, Inc. of Rockville, MD, under contract with Maryland Health Partners. Different survey instruments were used to assess satisfaction and outcomes for adults and children. Adults were contacted and asked to participate in the survey. Surrogate respondents (either their parents or their caretakers) were called to

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Statewide Consumer Telephone Surveys (Continued)

answer on behalf of consumers under age 16. The survey instruments were adapted from the Consumer Survey Tool developed by the Mental Health Statistics Improvement Program (MHSIP), and were developed via a collaborative process involving considerable stakeholder input. The adult and child samples selected

were representative of all individuals authorized for care in the PMHS.

For individuals successfully contacted, the response rate was 60% (n=865) for the adult survey, and 75% (n=492) for the child/family survey. Most respondents (78% adult; 76% child/family) indicated either agreement or strong agreement with the statement "I am satisfied with the mental health services received."

Continued

Table 1: Service Utilization by Adult Respondents

Service	Percent Using Service (past 6 months)
Outpatient Mental Health Services	74.3
Inpatient Mental Health Program	15.1
Psychiatric Rehabilitation or Day Programs	21
Residential Rehabilitation Programs	8.3

Table 2: Outcome Measures for Adult Respondents

As a direct result of all the mental health services I received...	N	% Agree or Strongly Agree	% Disagree or Strongly Disagree
I deal more effectively with daily problems	682	72.4	15.4
I feel better about myself	693	72.5	15.7
I am better able to control my life	697	71.5	16.2
I am better able to deal with crisis	689	67.3	17.8
I am getting along better with my family	659	64.8	18.2
I do better in social situations	667	64.2	19.1
I do better in school or work	450	43.6	13.3
I do better with my leisure time	680	63.1	21.5
My housing situation has improved	612	51.3	21.3
My symptoms are not bothering me as much	691	64.6	24.0
I have become more independent	670	64.8	19.5
The medications I am taking help me control symptoms that used to bother me	608	69.1	11.4
I have become more effective in getting what I need	672	66.4	18.4
I can deal better with people and situations that used to be a problem for me	675	66.8	18.2
Outcomes Scale	705		

Telephone Surveys

(Continued)

This suggests a relatively high degree of overall satisfaction with mental health services provided during the first year of implementation of the new Public Mental Health System.

The report also includes information on demographics, marital and family status, educational status, and work status. Contacts and satisfaction with Maryland Health Partners, the Core Service Agencies, the HealthChoice Managed Care Organizations, and substance abuse services were also collected.

The child/family survey also includes information on utilization of and satisfaction with other child service delivery agencies.

Interviewers asked respondents about what improvements in symptoms, housing, family and social situations, independence, and other outcomes they have experienced as a direct result of services received. Reports of satisfaction with multiple aspects of four service types were also assessed for both the child/family and adult surveys. (For a more detailed report turn to the Maryland Health Partner's Website at www.MDHP.com.) These tables (page 2-4) highlight survey results. ■

Table 3: Adult Overall Satisfaction with PMHS and Specific Service System Components

Item	N	% Agree or Strongly Agree	% Disagree or Strongly Disagree
I am satisfied with the mental health services I received	850	77.9	14.2
I feel I had a choice in selecting my service provider	847	60.3	30.0
I am satisfied with the outcome of that contact (with the CSA)	179	83.8	10.1
I am satisfied with the outcome of that contact (with MHP)	167	77.8	17.4
I am satisfied with my substance abuse services	123	91.0	5.7

Table 4: Use of Four Service Types by Child Consumers

Service	Percent Using Service (past 6 months)
Outpatient Mental Health Services	72.1
Psychiatric Hospital/Inpatient Mental Health Program	7.8
Residential Treatment Center	6.4
Family Support Services	17.1

February is
**BLACK HISTORY
MONTH**

May 5th is
**NATIONAL ANXIETY
SCREENING DAY**

Table 5: Outcomes Measures for Respondents to Child Survey

As a direct result of all the mental health services my child received...		% Agree or Strongly Agree	% Disagree or Strongly Disagree
<i>Family Outcomes Subscale</i>	406		
I had more time for recreation and social activities	338	24.5	47.7
I took less time off from work (or school)	277	25.5	35.3
I feel less stress	395	49.0	39.8
Overall our family is doing much better	399	64.9	21.0
<i>Child Outcomes Subscale</i>	408		
(Child's name) deals more effectively with daily problems	396	61.5	24.1
(Child's name) feels better about him/herself	391	63.4	29.8
(Child's name) is better able to control his/her behavior	400	55.2	27.8
(Child's name) is better able to deal with crisis	387	50.3	28.5
(Child's name) is getting along better with the family	393	67.1	15.3
(Child's name) is doing better in social situations	390	62.5	17.8
(Child's name) is doing better in school/work	362	58.8	20.5
(Child's name) is doing better with leisure time	383	64.4	18.5
(Child's name) is bothered less by his/her symptoms	371	56.1	25.1
(Child's name) has become more independent	392	63.2	22.7
(Child's name) has become more effective in getting what he/she needs	388	66.1	16.3
(Child's name) can deal better with people and situations that used to be a problem	383	57.1	22.6
(Child's name) is better able to get physical health care	310	59.5	9.2
(Child's name) has improved social skills	389	64.9	17.8
Overall Outcomes Scale	408		

Table 6: Child Overall Satisfaction with PMHS and Specific Service System Components

Item	N	% Agree or Strongly Agree	% Disagree or Strongly Disagree
I am satisfied with the mental health services (my child) received	468	76.1	17.0
I feel I had a choice in selecting (my child's) service provider	460	61.8	31.4
I am satisfied with the outcome of that contact (with the CSA)	122	87.7	8.2
I am satisfied with the outcome of that contact (with MHP)	92	86.0	9.7
I am satisfied with the substance abuse services (my child) received	28	70.0	23.4

CLAIMS PAYMENT

In reviewing the claims payment process at Maryland Health Partners (MHP), clean claims are being processed within 14 to 20 days. We understand that some providers still may have claims which have yet to be adjudicated. Generally, MHP has cleaned its backlog of pending claims and you should, therefore, assume that there are none pending. Therefore, any outstanding claims you may have are not on record at MHP. We believe these claims are not on record because they were rejected at the Med-Link level. This rejection occurred because demographic information was incorrect or inconsistent. If you believe that there is any claim you have not been paid for, resubmit with the appropriate demographic information. For future claims be sure to check the payor report first to determine whether all claims pass the first edits of Med-Link.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

3/16/99 **Cultural Fest** at the Maritime Institute in Baltimore (near BWI airport) -- a celebration represented among health professionals, service providers, consumers, consumer advocates and families of the PMHS. Contact Iris Reeves at (410) 767-6612 for more information.

3/19/99 10-3PM **DHMH's Early Bird Spring Fest** at 201 W. Preston Street, Lobby Level. Free Workshops, health screenings, prize giveaways, and light entertainment. Free anxiety screening 1 to 3PM. Co-sponsors: Mental Health Association of Maryland and Maryland General Hospital. For more information, call Jean Smith at (410) 767-6629.

3/25/99 **Bridging the Gap Between Substance Abuse & Domestic Violence** workshop at VAMC, Perry Point -- Bldg. 314, Theater; 8:30 -3:30 PM. Limited seating; call the VAMC to register early. Lunch is included in registration fee, and 5.5 Contact Hours available -- APA, SW, NAADAC.

4/5/99 **Public Health Week Kick-off Celebration** (noon) at 201 W. Preston in the Lobby. Watch for flyer for other activities during the week or call your local health department for more information.

4/10/99 **Month of the Young Child** celebration at Port Discovery from 10 AM - 4:00 PM. For more information call the Office of Children, Youth and Families at (410) 767-4182.

4/12-13/99 Maryland Aging Network Workshop at the Princess Royale in Ocean City; entitled **"Workshop '99 — Surfing the Aging Network"**. For more information call Susan Brooks at (410) 887-3424.

4/16/99 **Third National Teleconference on Violence Prevention** on the topic of **"Safe Schools"** — provided by DHMH/MHA and Harvard University. For site locations, call Henry Westray at (410) 767-5650.

4/16/99 **C&A Training** at the Meeting House in Columbia; focus is on **"The Young Child."** For more information contact Eileen Hanson at (410) 706-4967.

4/21/99 1:30 - 5:00 PM **Satellite Teleconference — "Expanding Options"** (SSI Work Incentives and Transition Aged Students). Locations Maryland Rehabilitation Center, Chesapeake College and Frederick Community College. Registration materials to be distributed... watch your mail!

4/23/99 **NAMI Maryland 17th Annual State-wide Conference**, entitled **"Getting Well, Staying Well: Living with Mental Illness-Part II."** Being held at Maritime Institute; seating is limited so register early by calling 1-800-467-0075.

4/30/99 **13th Annual MD Conference on Social Work Practice** in mental health titled **"Clinical and Policy Issues in the Next Millennium"** will be held at Bon Secours Spiritual Center in Marriottsville. For more information, contact Iris Reeves at (410) 767-6612.

5/1/99 9:00 to Noon **"Walk the Walk for Mental Health"** in Prince Frederick at Calvert Memorial Hospital. Informational booths, refreshments and other fun activities at the Fox Run Shopping Center. For more information call Nancy Porter at (410) 535-5400 X330.

5/8/99 8:30 AM **DHMH's Mental Health Month Kick-off Celebration and One-Mile Walk at White Marsh** (inside the mall). Activities include health screenings, prize give-aways, entertainment and informational vendors. For more information call Jean Smith at (410) 767-6629.

NAMI MD OFFERS NEW PROGRAM FOR AGING CAREGIVERS

by Agnes B. Hatfield, Ph.D.

NAMI has long recognized that one of the greatest sources of anxiety among their members is their not knowing what will happen to a relative with mental illness when they, the caregivers, grow old and can no longer provide care and support. With the rapid growth of older individuals in our society the need to do something about this problem has become increasingly urgent. Thanks to a recent grant from the Maryland Mental Hygiene Administration, NAMI now has an opportunity to begin addressing this concern. The new NAMI project on aging caregivers will be directed by myself with the assistance of Suzanne Paszly, NAMI Program Director.

Much of the initial focus of the project is learning about the problems that arise when parents and other caregivers age, suffer decline in health, and/or pass away. For this purpose, a survey questionnaire is being circulated among caregivers. ***The help of service providers is needed to reach as wide a range of older caregivers (age 65 and over) as possible. Please call Suzanne Paszly at (410) 671-7100 for copies of the questionnaire.***

NAMI project staff are also interested in learning the experiences of consumers who may be coping with the declining health of parents or who have suffered recent loss of caregivers. NAMI would like to learn about the problems and issues consumers face and how this period in life could be made less difficult for them. Finally, they would like to talk to interested service providers to learn their perspectives about problems that arise when caregivers of their clients age. NAMI would also like to learn from professionals about any developments in the program that have been made to address these issues.

You may contact me at (301) 982-2053 to share your ideas.

NAMI is presenting workshops in the various Maryland counties to provide help to aging caregivers. Workshop presenters help participants identify barriers to future planning for their relatives and suggest ways to overcome these barriers. Families learn about community resources available to them from staff in mental health, aging, and social services. Attorneys specializing in estate planning discuss the development of trusts and wills in families with disabled members. ■

May is NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Reminder:
MHA's Annual Conference
May 13 and 14
at the Towson Sheraton.
Topic: **Prevention
Throughout the Life Span.**

Note from Editor: Deadline for submission of articles for the next issue of **Linkage** is **March 12, 1999.**

Linkage

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*Contributions are welcome, but
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send to Editor at above address.*